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2002

## African and African American Studies Newsletter, Spring Quarter 2002

African and African American Studies

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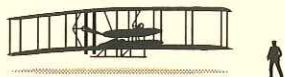
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# WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

## NEWSLETTER AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY  
DAYTON, OHIO 45435

### SPRING QUARTER 2002

#### FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Greetings. Welcome to the inaugural volume of the African and African American Studies AFS Newsletter. You will note that the Newsletter is divided into five headings. These are Course Offerings; Faculty and Students in the News; Faculty Reflections; Student Reflections; and Director's Corner. We hope that this format increases knowledge of the major and minor, of the accomplishments of AFS faculty and students, and of the views of AFS faculty and students on issues impacting the African American experience past and present.

If you have any suggestions about the format or focus of the Newsletter, please contact us at 775-5532 or email us at [nancy.buckheister@wright.edu](mailto:nancy.buckheister@wright.edu).

The offices of AFS recently moved from the western part of the student Union to the Formal Lounge. Plans are that AFS will move into the renovated Millett Hall some time in July of this year. More on where we will be located later.

#### SPRING QUARTER COURSES

AFS 300	African Perspectives and Models of Success	T (E) (7:00-9:45)
COM 102	Interpersonal Communication	M, MW, & F (various times)
ENG 205	Afro-American Literature	T, TH (3:30-4:45)
HST 490	African American Biographies	M (4:00-6:50)
MUS 197	Paul L. Dunbar Chorale	T, TH (3:30-5:00)
MUS 481	African American Sacred Music	W (5:30-8:00)
MUS 397	Paul L. Dunbar Chorale	T, TH (3:30-5:00)
REL 435	Black American Religious Thought	TH (7-9:45)
SOC 341	Social Inequality	T, TH (4:00-5:15)
SOC 442	Race and Minority Relations	T, TH (11:00-12:15)

#### Course Descriptions:

AFS 300 African American Perspectives and Models of Success



A critical study of real-life problems impacting African American life: economics, education, crime, gender issues, urban problems, and globalism, etc. This course utilizes real-life models of success as examples of how to effectively overcome these problems. Prerequisite: AFS 200.

### COM 102 Essentials of Interpersonal Communication

Introduction to interpersonal and interpersonal communication process as they affect communication style and competence. Emphasis on a holistic approach to communication by understanding concepts, analyzing experiences, and practicing new skills.

### ENG 205 Afro-American Literature

Reading in African-American literature: for example, Phyllis Wheatley to present, nineteenth-century freedom literature, twentieth century black novel, and the female African-American tradition. Titles vary. Prerequisite: ENG 102.

### HST 490 Topics in African-American History

Examines topics drawing from the African-American experience; may include black ideology and leadership, racial tension in urban society, and the civil rights movement. Topics vary. Prerequisite: HST 211, 212; or HST 214, 215.

### MUS 197 Paul Laurence Dunbar Chorale

A choral ensemble for students who desire to explore the musical style of gospel music and its roots and various forms. Includes performances of a body of literature associated with the African-American church to the university and surrounding communities.

### MUS 481 African American Sacred Music

An intensive examination of the sacred music traditions beginning with spirituals and their significance in slavery, the early development of the Black church; the shout, lined-hymn; various styles of gospel music; and the influence of African American sacred music on secular traditions. (This course is essential for developing a comprehensive understanding of African American culture and the important role of music.)

### MUS 397 Paul Laurence Dunbar Chorale

A chorale ensemble exploring the musical style of gospel music and its roots and various forms. Includes on and off campus performances of a body of literature associated with the African-American church. Audition required.

### REL 435 Black American Religion Thought

Analysis of black American religions thought through critical study of the writings of selected figures that have helped shape black religion from 1780 to the present.

### SOC 341 Social Inequality

Structures, theories, and consequences of social inequality with special emphasis on the United States.

### SOC 442 Race and Minority Relationships

Study of intergroup, racial, and ethnic group relations including the process and consequences of conflict, prejudice, and discrimination.

## FACULTY AND STUDENTS IN THE NEWS:

Dr. Frank E. Dobson, Jr., recently had his short story, *Junior Ain't* accepted for publication by the African American short story anthology *Proverbs for the People*. *Proverbs for the People* (Kensington



Press, 2002) is an anthology of short stories each of which corresponds to and exemplifies in its storyline or plots an African proverb.

Dr. Barbara L. Green published *Dayton: Civic, Literary and Mutual Aid Associations in Organizing Black America: An Encyclopedia of African American Associations* (Garland Publishers) and did presentations on Prescriptive and Corrective Goals in Teaching African American History, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium, Department of Afro-American Studies, Indiana University and Reconstructing African American history through Traditional and Non-traditional Sources, African-American Genealogy Group of the Miami Valley. Presentation of Book Review of *Forced into Glory* by Lerone Bennett, Jr. at Central State University Brown Bag Book Review Series. Recipient of service award from Black Women Striving Forward The Strong Black Woman is Not Dead Award for service to community and Wright State University.

Dr. Paul R. Griffin has two book reviews forthcoming in the *Journal of Episcopal History*. The books he reviewed are, Michael J. Beary, *Black Bishop: Edward T. Demby and the Struggle for Racial Equality in the Episcopal Church* and S. Jonathan Bass, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Martin Luther King, Jr., Eight White Religious Leaders, and the Letter from Birmingham Jail*.

Professor Griffin's book *Seeds of Racism in the Soul of America* continues to attract attention all across the United States. The cloth edition was published in 1999. The paper edition appeared in 2000. This past year Dr. Griffin appeared on over 84 major radio programs throughout the country, including National Public Radio stations to discuss his book. *Seeds* is in over 300 public, university, and seminary libraries. It is listed on syllabi of professors from the East Coast to the West Coast. It has become commonplace to find *Seeds* featured alongside of works by nationally and internationally known scholars and public figures such as Derrick Bell, Beverly Daniel Tatum, Cornel West, Morris Dees, and Ellis Cose.

## FACULTY REFLECTIONS



### **Exceptional Women**

In January people from the Miami Valley and throughout the nation gathered first in Wilberforce, Ohio and then in Dayton, Ohio to bid farewell to two exceptional women, Edith Olivia Washington Johnson and Charity Edna Adams Earley. Both women left an outstanding legacy of achievement and service to the African American community. Edith Washington Johnson passed away on Sunday, January 6, 2002. Born June 5, 1924 in Tuskegee, Alabama Johnson was a granddaughter of the founder and first president of Tuskegee Institute, Booker T. Washington. She was the third of four daughters born to Ernest Davidson Washington, the second son of Booker T. Washington, and his wife. Johnson received a B.S. degree from Central State University and a Masters degree from Tuskegee. She held several positions at Central State University, including Director of Financial Aid, Director of Admissions, and



Associate Dean of Students. In 1988 Mrs. Johnson retired from Central State University after thirty-five years of service. Throughout her life Johnson remained active with national civil rights, academic, and service organizations, including the NAACP, the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, the African American Genealogical Group of the Miami Valley, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and Links, Inc.

Charity B. Earley passed away a week later on Sunday, January 13, 2002. Born December 5, 1918 in Kittrell, North Carolina Earley was the daughter of Rev. Eugene and Charity Adams. In 1938 she received a Bachelor's degree from Wilberforce University and taught mathematics and science in Columbia, South Carolina until 1942. That year the Dean of Women at Wilberforce University recommended her for the Women Army Auxiliary Corps. On August 29, 1942 Charity Adams became the first black female commissioned officer in the U.S. Army. She was the commanding officer of the 6888 Postal Battalion, the only organization of Black women to serve overseas during World War II. In 1946 Earley retired from the Army with the rank of Lt. Colonel. She then continued her education at Ohio State University where she received a masters degree in Vocational Psychology. Earley taught at Tennessee A&I in Nashville and at Georgia State College in Savannah. In 1949 Earley and her husband moved to Zurich, Switzerland. Earley attended Zurich University, became proficient in German, and enrolled in classes at the Jungian Institute of Analytical Psychology. After their return to the United States, Earley devoted herself to her family and community service. A member of Delta Sigma Theta and a lifelong community leader, Earley was the co-founder of Parity, Inc. She served on several boards, including the Urban League, Wilberforce University, the American Red Cross, Greater Allen A.M.B. Church, Citizens Savings and Loan, and Dayton, Power and Light. In 1989 Earley published her memoirs, One Woman's Army: A Black Officer Remembers the W.A.C. Earley was the recipient of numerous citations and awards and two honorary doctorates.

I did not know Charity Earley. I read about her military service, and people, who did know her, like Professor Emeritus Alyce E. Jenkins told me about her achievements, her graciousness, strength, and commitment to the community. A few years ago I did have the privilege of meeting Edith Washington Johnson and her sister, Margaret Washington Clifford of Atlanta. Subsequently, I had the pleasure of getting to know Mrs. Johnson better. She was an elegant woman of quiet dignity, quick wit and keen intelligence. I often listened to her talk about Booker T. Washington, Tuskegee, and the Washington descendants. She was also quite down to earth. One of my fondest memories is of the summer afternoon we bumped into each other and then shared a meal of pizza together. I learned a great deal of history from Mrs. Johnson. I also learned that historical figures are also grandfathers and grandmothers whose grandchildren want historians to be fair with their relatives for they are, after all, human beings just like the rest of us.

In closing it is important to note that coming of age at a time when legalized racial segregation existed makes the achievements of Edith Johnson and Charity Earley all the more outstanding. Their lives, careers, and achievements also distinguish Johnson and Earley as undisputed models of the capability, dignity, elegance, intelligence, and strength of Black Womanhood.

Barbara L. Green, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of History

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## STUDENT REFLECTIONS:

### REFLECTIONS IN THE DARK



Donald Newberry

I see a nebulous mass of many interpretations: ragged yet immaculate; successful yet defeated; beautiful yet putrid. As *my* eyes focus, *my* mind recalls a nation of black men united against a common enemy. The foe went by the aliases of bigotry, ignorance, and violence. The foe was no match for the ineradicable unity of brothers and sisters united in the same struggle. The same concrete union that crippled a Montgomery Bus Company at a whim's notice. This ingenious union established Harlem as America's undisputed Mecca of literary and artistic expression. The innovative union that originated every major musical hybrid today, with its first note coming from an African hand and drum. That was *my* foundation and I was their inspiration.

*My* brothers consider fraternal kinship an ephemeral pipe dream. They are mere thespians that alternate betwixt the roles of Cain and Abel, and groom their children in early ages to establish a stage presence. *My* brothers are full of vigor and zest, but void of appreciation and direction. Blinded by green veils with intricate sketches of presidential heroes, that subterfuge pain as love and love as pain. Too many of *my* brothers believe the term fatherhood only entails the creation of children. This is *my* life as the disjointed youth of yesterday's inspired.

I manifested *myself* last spring in Cincinnati's urban rioting after the city's police department killed its 15<sup>th</sup> Black male within a six-year period. As *my* struggle to catch focus, many minds flashed back to the race riots of the 1960s, which saw a frustrated mass of black men destroying all in their path. Black business owners proudly bore signs in their windows that read *Soul Brother* or *Black Owned*, which ostensibly protected their businesses from angry mobs of Black rioters decades ago. Unfortunately, there were no signs that would exempt Black businesses from pilfering rioters during Cincinnati's latest episode. I used the death of Timothy Thomas as justification to loot Black owned businesses. *My* soul is nauseated, imagining that I still harbor that enough self-hatred that compels me to pompously destroy *my* brother's dream and defer mine. I stare in disgust at a body that convokes by the hundreds with enough zeal to burglarize superficial items from our family businesses; but refuse to gather at City Hall to directly criticize police procedures that steal away *my* life for withdrawing *my* wallet from *my* pocket on a Brooklyn stoop.

One of the indelible marks of manhood is the accountability of his actions. How many prison and death sentences is it going to take for me to realize that I need to control *my* destiny? *My* glance into the mirror has shown me fatal glimpses of apathetic eyes that seem defeated by all they have seen. Paradoxically, the sparkle in the eyes of a loved one seems to be immortalized with every blink, like freeze-frame snapshot of euphoria. If I can't respect *myself* enough to create a better life for me, the least I can do is love my children enough to offer them the gift of pristine life.

I ask *my* gray-haired Dad to reunite with his children; for his wisdom and guidance is essential for my vitality. I ask *my* brother to respect life and pay homage to love and all of its manifestations. I salute *my* sister for her nurturing motherhood, gracious sisterhood, and phenomenal womanhood through *my* life. Lastly, I pray that *my* children touch sky tops as their feet rest securely and eternally on *my* shoulders. This is *my* bittersweet reflection of African-American manhood.

I stopped loving my father a long time ago.  
What remained was a slavery to a problem.

Anais Nin

### THE BLACK CHURCH

Byron Thomas

We recently celebrated the life and accomplishments of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and February is Black History Month; therefore it is fitting to address the subject of the Black church as it has served as



a pillar of the African American community throughout our history in America. Beginning with the invisible church, so named because it consisted of a congregation of slaves who gathered in the woods, in the open air rather than in a building to pray to their God, to sing Negro spirituals and to support and encourage one another in order to survive the brutality of slavery, and continuing with the founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Civil Rights Movement to present day.

The Black church has, without question, served as a spiritual sanctuary for the African American community and has helped black people transcend the intuition of slavery, gain significant ground in our struggles for justice and equality and served as a buffer against racism and discrimination that permeates American society. Considering the important role that the Black church has played and continues to play in the lives of African Americans and the fact that it comprises the largest gathering of the black community. It is unfortunate that black clergy, with the exception of a few brave men and women, have refused to broach the subject of how Christianity and the Bible were used as a means to justify the enslavement of black people and to systematically eradicate our African cultural traditions and language from among us in an effort to prevent the black community from unifying against oppressive forces. Black clergy have also, for the most part, failed to address the importance of the recovery and reconstruction of our rich historical legacy from the pulpit. This significant because the word religion is derived from the Latin *religio*, which implies that a people's religious experience should serve to ground them in their historical and cultural heritage.

It appears to me that many black preachers and ministers have failed the African American community by refusing to confront such important issues because they have traditionally focused more on heavenly salvation as opposed to the earthly salvation of black people. This has rendered the Black church impotent in terms of tackling a myriad of problems that African Americans face in the United States. Perhaps many among the black clergy are simply ill equipped to address such matters because they lack the knowledge that would enable them to do so or perhaps they are afraid that members of their congregation will not be able to comprehend earlier, on the one hand, it has promoted the assimilation of black people in American society, along with the maintenance of the status quo in many respects.

I am convicted that black preachers and ministers must address both the positive and negative aspects of the black religious experience in America. In doing so, they will empower themselves and their congregations to critically evaluate their religious practices. This, I believe, will lead to the transformation of the black religious experience as the Black church realizes the urgent need to embrace the tenements of Black Liberation Theology as set forth by Dr. James Cone. According to Dr. Cone, the key points of Black Liberation Theology include the following. Firstly, it must address the condition and struggles of black people and must effectively communicate to all who oppress us that nothing will be spared in the fight for freedom. Secondly, Dr. Cone insists on the blackness of God and Jesus, stating there is no place for a colorless God in a society where people suffer precisely because of their color. Thirdly, Dr. Cone argues that the Good of Black Liberation Theology: is and must be the God of the oppressed by the land who makes himself known through their liberation. Finally, such a theological platform calls for the Black church to recapture its radical in the struggle for freedom, justice and equality.

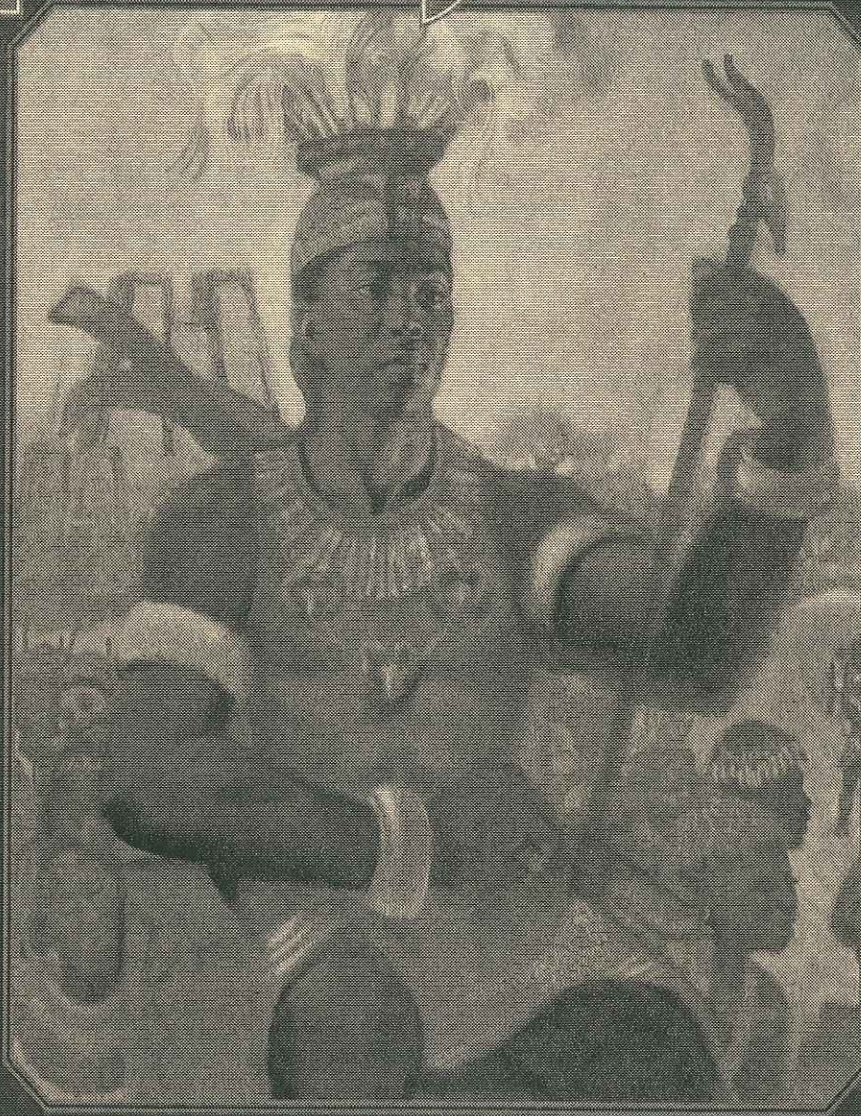
It is my contention that the adoption of the principles of Black Liberation Theology is paramount importance to the Black church and the community as a whole because it holds the power to transform the religious experience of black people by connecting us with our rich historical record, along with empowering the religious body to effectively address and solve many of the problems that plague our community, whether speaking of racism and discrimination, the attack on affirmative action policies and programs, the AIDS epidemic that is sweeping our community, high rates of unemployment, crime, and teenage pregnancy, along with the high rate of incarceration of black males, the weakening of the black family structure, low educational achievement, and the inability of the black community to establish a viable economic and politics that exclude us from full participation in the economic and political arena. All of which are issues that the Black church must play an active role in confronting if it is to truly serve the black community. Doing so will not only strengthen the Black church, but will also serve to strengthen the entire community. In addition, it will also serve as the best means of honoring the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and our ancestors, along with our rich historical legacy.

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Last January the Ohio Board of Regents approved the application of Wright State University to offer a major in African and African American Studies. We are most delighted that 5 students have declared AFS their major since January. These students join 9 students in the minor program, which began some 12 years ago under the direction of Dr. Barbara Green. We encourage all to tell their friends and even acquaintances about our major and minor. We have some exciting plans for the minor and major and we want you to be a part of making them realities.



# AFRICAN BEGINNINGS



JAMES HASKINS & KATHLEEN BENSON  
PAINTINGS BY FLOYD COOPER